RECOVERY OF RINGED BIRDS—(*contd.*)

Ring No. and Sex	Date and place of Ringing	Date and place of Recovery	Remarks
	Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava beema*)		
A-40575	7-10-1963. Bharatpur, Rajasthan (*c.* 27°13′N.,77°32′E.)	+ 0-6-1970. Tselinograd Reg., near Astrakhanka (*c.* 51°35′N., 69°47′E.)	Reported by Bird Ringing Centre, Moscow, USSR
	Spanish Sparrow (*Passer hispaniolensis*)		
A-77464 ♂	19-1-1969. Bharatpur, Rajasthan (*c.* 27° 13′ N., 77° 32′ E.)	+ 5-7-1969. Kazakh SSR, Alma-Ata Reg. Enbekshikazath Dt., near Issyko (*c.* 43° 22′N., 77° 28′ E.)	Reported by Bird Ringing Centre, Moscow, USSR
A-86138 ♀	6-3-1969. -do-	+ 13-10-1969. Chokpak, Russia (*c.* 42° 38′ N., 70° 31′E.)	Reported by E. Gavrilov
MOSCOW ♀ S-269 480	6-5-1968. Kazakh SSR, Dzhambul Reg., near Chokpak (*c.* 42° 31′ N., 70° 38′ E.)	24-12-1969. Bharatpur, Rajasthan, India (*c.* 27° 13′ N., 77° 32′ E.)	Recaptured and released by B.N.H.S. Staff with a new ring B.N.H.S. No. A-91428

+ Bird killed or shot by man.

BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY,
HORNBILL HOUSE,
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EDITORS

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9. *TESTUDO ELEGANS* IN WESTERN RAJASTHAN

According to Smith (1931) the Starred Tortoise, *Testudo elegans* Schoepff has a wide range of distribution in Central and Peninsular India, extending west as far as Sind and south to Ceylon. From Rajasthan, however, Smith reported the tortoise from Udaipur, east of the Aravalli ranges. Recently, the tortoise has been observed at Bisalpur, about 5 km. north of Jawai Bandh railway station on the western side of the Aravallis. They inhabit foothill grasslands composed of *Sporobolus helvolus, Heteropogon contortus, Cymbopogon parkari, C. martinii, Dichanthium annulatum* and *Aristida* spp. The tortoise are, however, not very common. They were found to be quite active during

the day. One of the tortoise collected in March passed very loose excreta and in a large quantity. It contained only plant matter and grasses like *Sporobolus, Dichanthium, Cymbopogon* and *Aristida* could be identified. The same species of grasses were also identified from the faecal matter of a tortoise collected in the month of October.

Smith (1931) reported that a female *T. elegans* deposited four eggs on 11 November. Minton (1966) mentioned that these tortoise in semi-domestication in the suburbs of Karachi copulate soon after the onset of rains. A clutch of five eggs was reported in the month of November. Young ones were collected late during August and September. Minton regarded them to be several months old and suspected that hatching occurs during February and March. The hatchlings remain buried and quiescent until the onset of rains. The young tortoise collected at Bisalpur in September, however, appeared to be a newly-hatched one as its shell was membranous and could be punctured with a pin. I, therefore, suspect that female tortoise lays eggs during the summer also. The eggs require slightly over three months for hatching as is the case with *Testudo horsfieldi* (Sergeev 1941). It is not, therefore, unlikely that *Testudo elegans* lays eggs during winter and second time during the summer. The observed hatchling might have been from a summer brood.

I could not make further observations on the young one as a House Rat, *Rattus rattus rufescens* cut open the membranous shell and scooped the hatchling for its dinner.

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Central Arid Zone Research Institute, ISHWAR PRAKASH
Jodhpur,
November 18, 1970.

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10. THE CATCHING OF SNAKES

Finding a snake is the first problem a prospective ophiologist must take up. One can learn by experience, by searching 'likely' places repeatedly, at different times of day and night, during different seasons of the year, to ascertain which species may be found where and when.